

*Is there any feature that makes their publication particularly timely and worthwhile?* The most valuable features, for my money, are the concluding sections in I. and R. on preaching and the equivalent one on theological and pastoral perspectives, ending with a note on preaching, in P. These are strikingly successful in drawing together the results of the foregoing examination of the texts and presenting them in a way which is coherent, bracing and in the true sense evangelical. (The lack of anything to correspond in S., where the final section on the practicability of the Sermon, though fair as far as it goes, is not an adequate substitute, is one reason why in that volume the preaching has tended to spill over into the exegesis).

I. insists that 'the infancy narratives can be correctly understood only if we read them as composed after, and in the light of, the resurrection experience', and that this means that they 'do not add anything really new to the gospel message proper'. Hendrickx is therefore ruthless with embellishments which the devotional tradition of Christianity from the apocryphal gospels onwards has superimposed on the gospel story, and which continue to dominate even the secular presentation of Christmas; a sermon must not 'look like a Nativity play, but rather what it should always be, a proclamation of Jesus as the Lord and Saviour'.

R. warns similarly against concentrating on secondary features of the stories, angels at the tomb or sentimental reflections on the journey to Emmaus, and so on. It also emphasizes the ambiguity of the part played in the narratives by the discovery of the empty tomb, and the absence of any use of it to demonstrate the truth of the resurrection. 'There is no basis in the New Testament', the author says, 'for saying that the apostles proclaimed the empty tomb. It is never mentioned in their preaching. They proclaim not the empty tomb but the risen Christ'. Behind this statement lie two pages in the exegetical section (R., pp. 15–16) which should be required reading for Easter preachers of all traditions. Those who have fully digested them should be proof against intimidation by one-sided and alarmist second-hand reports of the views of radical theologians and radical bishops.

H. BENEDICT GREEN CR

**GOD IN FRAGMENTS**, by Jacques Pohier, trans. by John Bowden. *SCM Press*, London 1985. £9.50 paper.

This is a translation of the remarkable book by the French Dominican Jacques Pohier, *Dieu Fractures*, published in French in 1985 and reviewed in *New Blackfriars* by Fergus Kerr OP in the article 'Pohier's Apologia, NB Vol 66 No 779 (May 1985) pp. 216–224.

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